

For discussion
on 21 January 2013

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON PUBLIC SERVICE

Policy Initiatives of the Civil Service Bureau

Our Vision

The Civil Service plays a pivotal role in the administration of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The Civil Service Bureau (CSB) strives to foster a dynamic, visionary and knowledge-based workforce to deliver quality service to the community and to uphold the core values of the Civil Service.

New Initiative

Strengthening civil service training

2. The Administration is committed to providing civil servants at different ranks with training and development opportunities, thereby equipping them with the necessary skills, knowledge and mindset to serve the public. While bureaux/departments (B/Ds) provide vocational training to meet job-specific needs, CSB, through the Civil Service Training and Development Institute (CSTDI), focuses mainly on training programmes which are best provided by a central training agency such as leadership and management, national studies and the Basic Law.

3. To support the enhancement of civil servants' competence in serving the public, CSTDI will strengthen training in areas of public engagement and innovative leadership/thinking, as well as communication with the public and the media. We will also continue to enhance the quality and variety of the e-learning resources available at the Cyber Learning Centre Plus ("CLC Plus") website to facilitate the pursuit of continuous learning among civil servants.

4. To keep pace with the development of closer ties between Hong Kong and the Mainland, we have strengthened national studies training for civil servants at various ranks by doubling the output from 2011-12. Such training may take the forms of seminars, theme-based visits to the Mainland, residential

courses at Mainland institutions, on-line learning materials and the Civil Service Exchange Programme. For the one-week Chinese Academy of Governance programme for senior directorates, we will, in 2013, enrich the content by incorporating visits to the developing cities in the Mainland. Also, in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the launching of national studies training, CSTDI will organise in 2013 seminars on topical issues featuring distinguished scholars from Mainland institutions.

5. Separately, under the current Civil Service Exchange Programme, civil servants of one side are attached to governments of the other side for about four to eight weeks. So far, we have partnered with the authorities of Beijing, Shanghai, Hangzhou and Guangdong. In 2013, the Exchange Programme will be extended to cover a few more Mainland provinces/cities.

On-going Initiatives

(A) Management of the civil service

6. The civil service has supported the Fourth Term Government in implementing many new policies and initiatives in a professional and effective manner. We will, on the one hand, continue to work with B/Ds to enhance efficiency through measures such as internal redeployment, streamlining and re-engineering, and on the other hand, render support to the civil service by strengthening the establishment to cope with additional workload. We will support creation of new civil service posts where operational need is fully justified and when the work involved cannot be undertaken by re-deployment of existing staff or through alternative modes of service delivery. To facilitate the delivery of new policy initiatives and improved services to the public, we have strengthened the civil service establishment by about 1% annually since 2007-08. The projected establishment as at 31 March 2013 as shown in the 2012-13 Estimates is 169 560 (the actual establishment of the civil service as at end October 2012 was 168 147). We expect the civil service establishment will be further increased in 2013-14 to meet service needs.

7. We will continue with our efforts to attract, in the spirit of equal opportunities and integration, young blood into the civil service and plan for smooth succession in B/Ds.

(B)Continuing to maintain and enhance morale of the civil service and to support civil servants to build partnership

8. In keeping with our policy to encourage meritorious performance at the individual level through proper recognition, we introduced in 2004 the annual “Secretary for the Civil Service’s Commendation Award Scheme”. A total of 77 civil servants from 35 B/Ds received commendations at a presentation ceremony held on 29 November 2012.

9. To recognise meritorious performance at the department and team levels, we have introduced the biennial “Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme” since 1999. The Scheme aims to recognise departments and teams that are committed to continuous improvement and strive to provide high quality customer-oriented services to the public. Awards are granted at team, departmental and inter-departmental levels, and the best practices of the winning departments are widely publicised. The Scheme will be launched again in 2013.

10. We are committed to fostering a partnership culture among civil servants by encouraging more communication between the management and staff, especially colleagues in the front line. We will continue to consult and engage staff through the existing staff consultative machinery both at the central and departmental levels. Our objective is to provide an open and caring work environment and to better understand the views and experience of staff, so that they will be motivated to perform at their best to facilitate the implementation of various policy initiatives.

(C)Continuing with the regular conduct of pay surveys so as to maintain broad comparability between civil service pay and private sector pay

11. The Government’s civil service pay policy is to offer remuneration sufficient to attract, retain and motivate staff of suitable calibre to provide the public with an effective and efficient service; and such remuneration is to be regarded as fair by both civil servants and the public they serve by maintaining broad comparability between civil service and private sector pay. Civil service pay is compared with private sector pay on a regular basis through the conduct of three types of survey: (i) a pay level survey (PLS) every six years to ascertain whether civil service pay is broadly comparable with private sector pay; (ii) a starting salaries survey (SSS) every three years to compare the starting salaries of non-directorate civilian Civil Service grades with the entry pay of jobs in the private sector requiring similar qualifications; and (iii) a pay trend survey every

year to ascertain the average year-on-year movements in private sector pay. The staff sides of the four central consultative councils are consulted on the annual civil service salary revision, as well as any salary revision following the SSSs and PLSs.

12. The SSS and PLS were both due to be conducted in 2012. The Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service (the Standing Commission)¹ has been invited by the Administration to conduct both surveys. For the 2012 SSS, the Standing Commission submitted its report on the findings and recommendations to the Chief Executive (CE) in December 2012. CSB will consult this Panel, the Standing Committee on Disciplined Services Salaries and Conditions of Service² and the staff sides before recommending to the CE-in-Council the application of the findings to the Civil Service. As for the more complicated PLS, it will take more time for the Standing Commission to consult the staff sides and to complete the field works. CSB will similarly consult this Panel and the staff sides on the application of the findings of the PLS after the Standing Commission has submitted its advice in due course.

Civil Service Bureau
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¹ The Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service is an independent advisory body made up of members (including its Chairman) from different professional background (including business/professional, human resources, academic, etc) responsible for advising and recommending the Chief Executive on matters relating to the pay and conditions of service of non-directorate civil service (with the exception of judicial officers and disciplined services staff).

² The Standing Committee on Disciplined Services Salaries and Conditions of Services, alike the Standing Commission, is an independent advisory body which advises and makes recommendations to the CE on matters concerning the pay and conditions of service of the disciplined services.